

The Process and Power of Conviction

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, July 4th

How did Jesus transform the apostles from the proud, prejudiced, self-focused men they were; into the humble, gracious, and bold Ministers of God's Grace that they became?

The Gospels reveal that this process was Purposeful, Painful, and Critical.

1. It began as a Curiosity! (Jn 1:29-43)
2. It developed into a Call. (Jn 1:43; Mt 4:19,20)
3. It grew (transformed) into a Conviction! John 6:66-69; Acts 21:11-1

Curiosity → Call (to follow) → Conviction.

Lk 18:8 *"when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"*

Pistis: Persuasion, Conviction!

Conviction is forged in the Crucible of Crisis (Is. 48:10)

Because Crisis has a pruning/purging effect.

(Mt 13:20,21; 1 Peter 1:7; John 15:2)

"Every branch in me that bears not fruit he takes away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, (Kathai'rō: Cleanses and Cuts {Prunes}) that it may bring forth more fruit. "

3 *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."* See Ps. 119:9-11

God seeks to Transform us in much the same way as He did the apostles!

(Curiosity → Call → Conviction)

Ro. 12:1,2 *"I beseech ye therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (logikos: logical) service. And be not conformed (sychēmatiz'ō: from from the outside in) to this world: (aiōn': external age, period) but be transformed (metamorphoo: transformed from the inside out) by the renewing (anakai'nōsis: renovation) of your mind, (nous: understanding) that ye may prove (dokimazo: test and approve) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

Lk 18:8 *"when the Son of man cometh, shall he find (this type of) faith?"*

The temperature in the crucible (crisis) will increase in the last days!

2 Tim 3:1 *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."*

(chalepos') fierce! From Chala'o: difficult, to lower or let down, reduce strength.

God's word warns it will involve:

- 1) Massive deception. Dan. 12:4; 2 Thes. 2:9-12
- 2) Spiritual apostasy. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3,4; 2 Thes. 2:3
- 3) Moral decay. Lk 17:26-28; 2 Tim. 3;
- 4) Increase Conflict/ Wars. Mt. 24:6; Rev. 5
- 5) Centralized Government. Dan 2,7; Rev. 13
- 6) Centralized Currency. Rev. 13:16,17
- 7) Centralized Religion. Rev. 13:12)

Satan has been actively using (his) people to help set the stage for the last days. 2 Tim. 3:12
God is also preparing (pruning) His people... *"in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, Among whom ye shine as lights in the world, Holding forth the word of life..."* Ph. 2:15,16

(Mt. 5:14-16) **If the Light is unable or unwilling to shine, darkness will prevail!**
Edmund Burke *"All that is necessary for the triumph of Evil is that good men do nothing!"*
Albert Einstein *"The World's a dangerous place, Not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on, And do nothing!"*

America was born during a time of Crisis.

The English had an Army/Navy of over 500,000, in addition to 25,000 American "loyalists" who fought and spied for them; While Washington seldom commanded more than 48,000 at any one time. Understandably, America lost most of those early battles!

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/american-revolution-faqs>

Thomas Paine wrote "The Crisis" Dec. 23, 1776: *"These are the times that try men's souls! The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. "Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheaply we esteem too lightly: It's dearness only that gives everything its value. "Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated..."*

This stirred up America's "men" and eventually a total of some 210,000 fought in the war; Representing only 5% of the population!

God Blessed their commitment! George Washington wrote in 1778, *"The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all of this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."*

Even Benedict Arnold's treason was providentially discovered.

<https://ifapray.org/blog/gods-providence-in-american-history/>

America prospered so much in the decades following our birth that even (Atheistic) France sent Alexis de Tocqueville to investigate the reasons. He wrote: *"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors ... in her fertile fields and boundless forests. . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution – and it was not there. "(It was) not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great!"*
"Liberty considers religion as the safeguard of morality, and morality as the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of Freedom!" Democracy in America 1835

Conclusion: Webster's defines Crisis as: *"The turning point for better or worse in an acute disease or fever; an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life."*

God uses Crises as opportunities to develop our Conviction! (Faith)

Eph. 5:17 *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*

What is "God's Will" for us as we face the crisis of our changing and challenging culture?

Ph 2:15-16 *"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life;*

Application: Where are you in God's Process of Transformation? (Ro. 12:1,2)
Curious? Called? Or totally Committed?